

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-09 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 AF-06 FEA-01 EB-07 SAM-01 /092 W

----- 005865

R 021908Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9052

INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11239

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FR, MO, XI, PFOR, PINT

SUBJECT: FIGARO INTERVIEW OF HASSAN II

SUMMARY. ON THE EVE OF PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO MOROCCO, KING HASSAN II GRANTED AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO FIGARO. THE KING, DESCRIBING HIMSELF A MAN WITH A MISSION BUT NEVERTHELESS ONLY A MAN, COVERED A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS, TOUCHING MANY ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY MOROCCAN PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR AND MAGHREBIAN PROBLEMS IN GENERAL. AMONG THE HIGHLIGHTS WERE HIS STATEMENTS THAT NO MAJOR PROBLEMS EXIST BETWEEN FRANCE AND MOROCCO; THAT NATIONALIZATION OF FOREIGN GOODS AND PROPERTY IS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT BECAUSE OF THE UNIQUE WAY IT IS BEING CARRIED OUT; THAT MOROCCO HAS ALWAYS BEEN A HINGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST; AND THAT THE PRINCIPAL CONCERN OF HIS GOVERNMENT WAS THE SPANISH SAHARAN QUESTION. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT AMERICAN WITHDRAWAL FROM UNCLASSIFIED

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VIETNAM HAD IN NO WAY WEAKENED HER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A FRONT-PAGE INTERVIEW IN THE MAY 2 FIGARO, HASSAN II, KING OF MOROCCO, GAVE STRAIGHTFORWARD ANSWERS TO A NUMBER OF COMPLEX QUESTIONS. DESCRIBING HIMSELF FIRST OF ALL AS A MAN WHO TIRES OF HIS JOB LIKE ANY OTHER MAN, HE SAID THAT WHEN HE SAW HIS COUNTRYMEN WAITING HOURS BY THE ROADSIDE UNDER SUN AND RAIN FOR A GLIMPSE OF HIM IN HIS CAR, HE FELT HE HAD A CONTRACT WITH THEM HE COULD NEVER BREAK. HE LIGHTLY DISMISSED BENN BARKA AND OUFKIR, ADDING THAT THE FORMER WOULD HAVE BEEN BESIDE COHN-BENDIT IN 1968 HAD HE BEEN ALIVE, AND THAT THE LATTER "DID WHAT HE DID."

2. TURNING TO FRANCE, HASSAN SAID HE HAD BEEN INITIALLY ALARMED BY GISCARD'S STYLE, BUT THAT HE HAD COME TO REALIZE IT WAS AN ADROIT MANIFESTATION OF THE "NEW LOOK" IN POLITICS. THE ONLY PROBLEMS REMAINING BETWEEN FRANCE AND MOROCCO WERE THOSE THAT COULD BE SETTLED ON A FOREIGN MINISTRY LEVEL.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT "MOROCCANIZATION" OF FOREIGN (MAINLY) FRENCH) INTERESTS, THE KING WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EXPLAIN HOW THIS DIFFERED FROM NATIONALIZATION. FAR FROM BEING XENOPHOBIC, THE AIM OF MOROCCANIZATION WAS SIMPLY TO ENSURE THAT INDUSTRY BROUGHT A MORE DIRECT BENEFIT TO THE MOROCCAN ECONOMY, AND IN FACT TO ENCOURAGE MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT "IN CERTAIN SECTORS." BASICALLY, HASSAN CONCLUDED, WE SIMPLY WANT A MAJORITY INTEREST IN INDUSTRIES LOCATED IN OUR COUNTRY. THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT WAS IMPEDING RAPID TRANSFER OF FRENCH FUNDS OUT OF THE COUNTRY SIMPLY TO FORESTALL A BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT.

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4. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT INFLATION, ESPECIALLY OF PRICES OF STAPLES, THE KING SAID THAT PRODUCTION OF BASE PRODUCTS SUCH AS OIL AND SUGAR WERE INCREASING, BUT A CERTAIN INFLATION WAS UNAVOIDABLE, EVEN DESIRABLE, IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING COUNTRY.

5. HASSAN FELT THAT MOROCCO COULD SERVE NOT ONLY AS A CONTACT POINT BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ARAB STATES, BUT BETWEEN THE ARAB STATES AND AFRICA (PRESUMABLY BLACK AFRICA). HE ASSERTED THAT MOROCCO'S GREATEST PROBLEM, THAT OF THE SPANISH SAHARA, WHICH HE CALLED THE WEST SAHARA, COULD BE PEACEFULLY RESOLVED, BUT THAT THE DIFFERING POINTS OF VIEW ON THIS MATTER BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA WERE A SOURCE OF CONCERN TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE. ALGERIA AND MOROCCO, HE ADDED, HAD RESOLVED THEIR OTHER PROBLEMS.

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6. HASSAN SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE RECENT SEPARATION OF LIBYA FROM GREATER MAGHREB WAS INEVITABLE BECAUSE OF QADHAFI'S ATTRACTION TO NASSER, BUT THAT LIBYA WAS NOW GRADUALLY TURNING WEST AGAIN. NEVERTHELESS HE DOES NOT BLAME LIBYA FOR THE FAILURE OF THE GREATER MAGHREB CONCEPT TO MATERIALIZE, BUT RATHER THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITY AMONG MAGHREB STATES.

7. HASSAN CONCLUDED HIS INTERVIEW BY OBSERVING THAT AMERICA HAD IN NO WAY BEEN WEAKENED BY HER DECISION TO LEAVE VIETNAM. HAD SHE WANTED, SHE COULD HAVE THROWN MUCH MORE INTO THE WAR. ON THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, HE SAID THAT EVERYONE HAD MORE OR LESS

AGREED THAT BOTH ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS HAD A
RIGHT TO EXIST, BUT THAT ISRAEL HERSELF REFUSED TO
ACCEPT THE SECOND HALF OF THE FORMULA.
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